



NEWS RELEASE

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HOLIDAY DECORATIONS CAN SPARK DANGER IN HOMES

SAFE KIDS' Simple Tips Can Help Reduce the Risk of Residential Fires

For many families, decorating is an important part of traditional holiday celebrations. Lights, Christmas trees, and candles increase the holiday cheer, but if not used properly, these items can also increase the risk of residential fires, according to the Fire & Burn Prevention Task Force of the Lincoln-Lancaster County SAFE KIDS Coalition.

The U.S. Fire Administration estimates that candles will be the source of approximately 1,600 home fires during the holiday season. If improperly maintained or ignored, Christmas trees also pose a fire risk, causing about 200 fires during the holidays every year.

“Whether it’s Hanukah, Kwanzaa or Christmas, parents are focused on creating that special holiday experience, but when important safety measures are overlooked, parents unknowingly put their children at risk during this season,” said Brian Baker, Coalition Co-Chair. “Decorations are often the biggest culprits. By taking a few simple precautions with Christmas trees, candles and other decorations, parents can help keep holiday celebrations safe for the entire family.”

The Lincoln-Lancaster County SAFE KIDS Coalition recommends that parents take the following safety precautions while decorating their home:

- Inspect lights for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections or sockets;
- Use no more than three strings of lights on one cord;
- *Never* run an electrical cord under carpet;
- Select a fresh pine. It is less likely to catch fire, and all trees should be kept away from heat sources such as fireplaces, radiators and heating vents;
- To prevent an accidental tip-over or electrical burns, parents must always make sure the tree’s lights are hung out of the reach of young children;
- Burning candles shouldn’t be placed where they can be easily knocked down and should never be used to decorate a Christmas tree; and,
- Never leave a burning candle unattended or near flammable objects such as draperies or blankets.

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For more information on injury prevention during the holidays and additional child safety matters, visit www.safekids.org or contact Brian Baker with the Lincoln-Lancaster County SAFE KIDS Coalition at 441-8046.